

Reedsburg teacher reaches out with Movin' and Munchin'

Brenda Erdman knows the best place for children to learn healthy lifestyles is at home.

But Erdman, a physical education teacher at Reedsburg's Westside Elementary School, also knows that sometimes the home environment needs a boost. For the past eight years, the Movin' and Munchin' Schools program has given Erdman a ticket into students' homes.

"Anytime we can communicate with parents, it reinforces what we are trying to teach the kids," says Erdman. "The more you communicate with parents, the more they understand what you are trying to do. They learn we are all on the same side."

Parents earn miles

Erdman especially likes the option of getting families involved in the accumulation of Movin' and Munchin' miles. From her students, Erdman has heard of parents giving up smoking during the 10-week

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Wall decorations promoting Movin' and Munchin' schools at Westside School in Reedsburg

OLYMPIAN CORNER



with Suzy Favor Hamilton and Casey FitzRandolph

Adults should be movin', too

The primary focus of Movin' and Munchin' Schools is combating childhood obesity, but when Suzy and I travel to schools we also remind school employees that the program is for them, too. In some ways, it's even more important for adults.

Even though the WEA Trust asked us to join the program to inspire students to lead healthier lives, we've been very gratified to learn that we've motivated adults, as well. That's why school staff are strongly encouraged to participate in Movin' and Munchin' Schools.

Through our work with the Trust on Movin' and Munchin', we've come to

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Fun names can turn students into vegetable lovers

The French taught us that people eat with their eyes. New research is also showing what many restaurants have known for years—we also eat with our ears.

A Cornell University study shows that giving vegetables catchy new names—like X-Ray Vision Carrots—prompted preschoolers to eat nearly twice as much as when they were simply served carrots.

And there's more. The study of 186 four-year olds also showed the influence of these names might persist. Children continued to eat about 50% more carrots even on the days when they were no longer labeled X-Ray Vision Carrots. It shows that our taste buds are biased by our imagination. If you expect a food to taste good, it will.

“Cool names can make for cool foods,” says Brian Wansink, lead author of the study that was presented in March at the School Nutrition Association in Washington, D.C. “Whether it be ‘power peas’ or ‘dinosaur broccoli trees,’ giving a food a fun name makes kids think it will be more fun to eat.”

Similar results have been found with adults in restaurants, which is why menus will often call a chocolate cake a Bavarian Black Forest Chocolate Cake. Diners say that descriptive foods are tastier and more appealing than identical foods with generic names.



Researchers believe the naming tricks will work with older children, too, so remember this when trying to figure out how to get your students to eat more fruits and vegetables.

Have you taken a look at your school lunch menu lately? Rather than just calling the entrée a fish filet, see how it works when it's called a “Succulent Italian Sea-food Filet.”

More details on the study are available at www.SmarterLunchrooms.org.

Source: Medical News Today



Web site adds features

The movinandmunchin.com Web site has been enhanced recently, with more resources for staff and students. If you have not seen it lately, you may want to pay a visit.

A new link for staff has been added to the left side of the page called *Educational resources*. In this area, you will find links to Web sites offering teaching aides, modules, and lesson plans relating to healthy eating and fitness. Some sites offer toolkits to assist schools in rolling out wellness programs.

A new link for students, called Kids stuff, has also been added to the left side of the page. In this area you will find downloadable baseball cards of Olympians Casey FitzRandolph and Suzy Favor Hamilton, as well as downloadable action figures to color. There are also links to sites that offer games for kids and health information presented in a fun way.



Movin' and Munchin' is a program of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, and sponsored by the WEA Trust, a not-for-profit insurance organization created by public school employees, for school employees.



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learn what a growing problem Type 2 diabetes is becoming in our country. In fact, the U.S. rate of new cases of Type 2 diabetes has doubled over the past decade from 4.5 cases per 1,000 people in 1995-1997, to 9.1 cases per 1,000 people by 2007, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The American Diabetes Association says there are 57 million Americans who have pre-diabetes, in addition to the 23.6 million with diabetes. The suspected cause of the increase—rising obesity rates.

An awareness issue

Last year, the CDC released a study that indicated too many American adults are unaware of “pre-diabetes” and do not take action to reduce their risk. Part of the problem is many of us don’t realize that even if we have risks through poor health habits, there is still time to correct those habits and reverse many of the possible effects.



People with pre-diabetes—a condition in which blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not high enough to be classified as diabetes—are at increased risk for developing Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. But lifestyle changes such as diet and exercise can prevent or delay development of diabetes and its complications.

Different types of diabetes

Type 2 diabetes is different than Type 1 diabetes. Both types cause high levels of sugar in the blood, but Type 1 diabetes is unpreventable and is usually diagnosed before the age of 30.

Type 2 diabetes is commonly diagnosed after the age of 40, although it now often occurs at a younger age due in part to childhood obesity. When left undetected and untreated, diabetes can cause blindness, kidney failure, heart disease, strokes, nerve damage, and amputation.

“An opportunity exists to reduce the incidence of diabetes and its complications by increasing awareness of pre-diabetes among those who have the condition, and encouraging healthier lifestyles,” says Wendy Countryman, R.N., Care Manager at the WEA Trust who works with members who have diabetes and pre-diabetes. Countryman encourages

individuals who are at risk to check with their health care provider and health insurer to see what options are available to them.

Don’t wait for a diagnosis

Like high blood pressure, people with Type 2 diabetes don’t often feel the affects of the disease for years. Because of that, many people have already had the disease for 7 to 10 years when diagnosed with it. That’s why it’s so important for people to know their risk factors and act upon them. People at increased risk for diabetes should control their weight, increase their physical activity levels, and be tested annually.

“Early diagnosis is essential to successfully treat—and prevent or delay the onset of diabetes and its potential complications,” Countryman says. “Everyone should be aware of the risk factors for Type 2 diabetes such as being overweight or inactive.”

Do you know your risk?

The American Diabetes Association has a great online tool called the Diabetes Risk Test, which helps people find out if they are at risk for developing diabetes. Visit www.diabetes.org and select *Lifestyle & Prevention* and click *Risk Test* in the left hand column to find out more about your risk.

A record year for Movin' and Munchin'

The final total is in for the 2008-09 school year, and it's an impressive one. In its eighth year of existence, 172 schools across the state signed up by the February 15 deadline to participate in the Movin' and Munchin' Schools program, shattering the record of 115 last year.

"We have believed in the value of the program since we rolled it out," says Jon Hisgen, a health education and physical activity consultant with the Department of Public Instruction. "It is great to see more schools joining to combat our very serious problem of childhood obesity."

The program started in 2001 with funding from the Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention, and the WEA Trust joined as a sponsor in 2005. At that time, there were only 34 schools involved.

"Having the WEA Trust on board as the chief sponsor and promoter has been instrumental in the program growth," Hisgen says. "As more schools find out about it, we expect the growth to continue."

With the 172 schools participating in Movin' and Munchin', Hisgen says that means about 40,000 children and 15,000 parents and faculty are expected to be a part of the program this school year.



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Movin' and Munchin' program, or doing situps before breakfast, or cutting soda out of their diets. Erdman has even heard directly from parents who no longer have children at Westside, telling her that they miss the annual program.

"I try to stay in good communication with parents and encourage them to do things at home," Erdman says. "I have three kids myself, so I know how hard it is with time demands. I feel I sometimes have to change attitudes about fitness. Getting into good shape is not something that can be done quickly."

Education for all

Erdman believes it's important to educate the parents as well

as the students. She includes wellness information for parents when students go home with their activity sheets. Examples of that information include topics such as "Fun Facts on the Heart and How to Keep it Healthy," "Benefits of Aerobic Exercise," and "25 Healthy Snacks To Have Ready for Your Children."

"Fitness is not like math and reading," Erdman says. "You need to make conscious choices for fitness. Movin' and Munchin' is a great tool for holding students and parents accountable. It makes them think about what choices they are making."

Award-winning school

The Westside programs have earned awards from the Depart-

ment of Public Instruction (DPI) and the WEA Trust, but more than the award money, Erdman values Movin' and Munchin' as an opportunity to reach hundreds of students and their families each year.

"I can't be in everybody's homes, but I have to trust the parents to make good choices. It's fun to work through the kids to do that."

For more information

For any schools looking for ideas or information on a Movin' and Munchin' program, Erdman recommends the DPI resources. Erdman is also willing to offer suggestions to any faculty member who wishes to contact her at berdman@rsd.k12.wi.us.